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Summary of the 1,500-page preliminary report of a study carried out by the Office of Institutional Research of New York University to determine faculty satisfactions and dissatisfactions by means of a questionnaire distributed to all full-time faculty members in May 1959.

The 15-page questionnaire and the 9-point response value scale used in the study are described. Reactions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction were sought on a wide range of subjects which included personnel services, personnel and administrative policies and practices, faculty relationships with colleagues, physical plant facilities, and other items.

The summary presents only an overview drawn from the statistical analyses of responses from the 580 faculty respondents. The full preliminary report includes analyses of replies by school or college of the respondent, academic rank, age, and university salary. Access to the full preliminary report, which is available in only a few typewritten copies, is controlled by the Committee of the Elected Members of the New York University Senate.

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Condensed Summary of the Preliminary Report on the

STUDY OF FACULTY SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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Condensed Summary of the Preliminary Report on the

STUDY OF FACULTY SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS

AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

August 1961

The idea for a Study of Faculty Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions was developed over a period of years by the Committee of the Elected Members of the Senate of New York University. After the establishment of the University's Office of Institutional Research, that Office agreed to take responsibility for carrying on the study. A Preliminary Report of the Study is available in typewritten form, with a few carbon copies. The Preliminary Report, while by no means exhaustive, contains approximately 1,500 typewritten pages, including almost 1,000 tables of statistical data. The reader is referred to the full text of the Preliminary Report for details which are not included in this much condensed summary.

The study was conducted by means of a Questionnaire distributed to all full-time members of the University faculty in May, 1959. The returns were anonymous, respondents not being asked to sign the Questionnaire. The number of Questionnaires returned was disappointingly small. Only 580 usable replies were received, about 45 per cent of the number of full-time faculty members who were asked to report. A careful and critical statistical analysis of the of the returns shows that they provide an excellent sample of the entire group of full-time faculty members, with respect to a number of personal characteristics on which comparisons could be made. The returns have therefore been analyzed with confidence that they reflect reasonably accurately the general attitudes of the full-time faculty members of the University. The detailed statistical analysis of the sample will be found in Chapter I of

the Preliminary Report.

The Questionnaire was long, consisting of 15 pages of items, in check-list form, to which reactions were asked. The items were divided into six major Parts. Part I contained eleven items identifying certain characteristics of the respondents, such as the School or College of the University with which connected, academic rank, age, University salary, highest earned degree held, years of service at N.Y.U., etc.

Part II consisted of a list of 88 items to which respondents were asked to react with respect to the effect of each situation on their general feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction at this University. For each item a 9-point response-value scale was provided for checking, to indicate the respondent's reaction. The instructions were to check the mid-point on the scale, 5, if the condition mentioned in the item was one on which the respondents' satisfaction and dissatisfactions were approximately in even balance. The response-value of 5 is thus referred to as the neutral point on the scale. Scale values from 6 to 9 were to be checked to indicate varying degrees of satisfaction, with the highest response-value, 9, indicating the very greatest degree of satisfaction. Response-values of 4 and below similarly indicated varying degrees of dissatisfaction, with the lowest, 1, to be used for a serious condition affecting very adversely the respondent's effectiveness and morale. In the Preliminary Report the statistics are given for the central tendencies and distributions of the response-values on each of the items of the Questionnaire.

Part III of the Questionnaire asked for reactions to eighteen items of suggested innovations in University services and to ten suggested areas for uses to which any increased University income might be put. In the case of each item, the response-value scale, from 1 to 9, again was used so that

respondents might indicate the effect, either negative or positive, on their feeling of satisfactions at this University.

Part IV of the Questionnaire related to professional attitudes toward service at the University, again using the 9-point scale for indicating positive, neutral, or negative response-values. This section also asked for information concerning the scholarly activities of faculty respondents, and their connections with learned societies and professional organizations.

Part V of the Questionnaire related to the economic status of the faculty respondents. It included questions in such areas as housing, earnings of spouse, total income of self and spouse outside the University salary, and number of dependents.

Part VI related to attractions away from this University. One set of questions asked for information about offers received from other institutions within the past three years. Inquiry was also made about the faculty member's attitude toward the encouragement of such offers. Respondents were asked to evaluate each of some fourteen factors that might be present in an offer from another institution or organization, with respect to the importance of the factor on the decision to leave or to remain at this University. Request was made for the names of a few institutions to which the respondent would be attracted away from this University by an offer not involving a salary increase.

The purpose of setting up the items of the Questionnaire for response by checking, usually on the 9-point scale, was to facilitate tabulation by the IBM process, and also to simplify the answering of the Questionnaire by faculty members. Opportunity was also offered on each item for the respondent to write in any comment he cared to make. At the time the Preliminary Report was prepared no analysis had been made of these written-in comments, except

in the case of one or two items, so the data presented are based only on the tabulations of responses indicated by checkmarks on the returned Questionnaire.

In the Preliminary Report of the Study, the replies to each of the 163 items in Parts II to VI of the Questionnaire are reported for the total group of 580 respondents. Analyses of the replies are also made for respondents grouped according to each of four classifications -- by School or College, by academic rank, by age, and by University salary. The purpose of these analyses is to discover any tendencies for levels of satisfaction to differ among the various categories used in each kind of classification. The present condensed summary can make only a few observations from these statistical analyses, and the reader should consult the Preliminary Report of the Study for the many interesting details that are brought out there.

The 9-point checking scale worked out very well. The respondents tended to distribute their reactions among all the possible response-values. On the average 26.6 per cent of those responding to the 88 items of Part II checked the neutral response-value of 5, indicating that the item did not affect their feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction one way or another. The other responses in Part II were distributed fairly evenly among the remaining eight response-values in the scale. As was expected, however, the general trend of responses differed considerably from item to item in Part II.

One striking fact brought out in the tabulations is the extent to which the faculty respondents differed among themselves in their reactions to each of the items in the Questionnaire. On every item in Part II and also in almost all items in other Parts of the Questionnaire, the highest and the lowest extremes on the response-value scale were always checked by some respondents. This was not due to any tendency for just one or two eccentric

respondents always to check a response-value of 9 or of 1 on every item. Indeed, the respondents seemed to be very conscientious and discriminating in assigning response-values to each item in accordance with their personal evaluation of its merits. The tendency for both the highest and lowest response-values to appear in the reactions to each item was true, not only for the entire group of 580 respondents, but also for practically every category into which respondents were divided, for purposes of analysis, on each of the four classification items. In any category having a substantial number of respondents, say 40 or more, almost inevitably the very highest and the very lowest possible response-values on the scale would appear among the reactions.

The tendency of faculty members to differ among themselves, to "think otherwise" as someone has put it, has often been noted. It was interesting to see how consistent the responses to the Questionnaire were in this respect, with the extremes as well as the in-between values in satisfaction-dissatisfaction scale being found on practically every item in the Questionnaire. This has important implications for administrative actions. Any decision that is made or course of action that is carried out is almost certain to meet widely differing reactions among faculty members.

In Part II of the Questionnaire the 88 items were divided into six major sections. Section A, relating to physical plant facilities, consisted of 21 items. The average response-value for the entire group of respondents for the 21 items on physical plant facilities was 4.8, slightly on the unfavorable side of the scale. Classrooms, laboratories, research rooms, faculty offices, and elevator service were generally scored rather low. The item rating highest in this group was the one concerned with bookstore facilities. (It should be remembered that the ratings reflect the faculty

member's evaluation of his own satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the condition mentioned in the item.)

Section B of Part II consisted of 6 items related to personnel services (clerical assistance, graduate assistants, janitors, library staff). The average response-value for this group of items was 5.2, slightly above the neutral point on the scale. In general, ratings were low for the extent of clerical and graduate assistance, but above the neutral point for the quality of such assistants. The library staff received a rather high rating, indicating that this is in general a source of satisfaction to faculty members.

Section C of Part II consisted of 17 items related to faculty personnel policies and practices. The general trend of reactions on these items was slightly unfavorable, with an average response value of only 4.8. All the items in this section relating to faculty salaries received low ratings. The "fringe benefit" provisions, however, such as retirement, life insurance, health insurance, tuition remissions, etc., received favorable reactions, the average response values on all such items being well above the neutral point on the scale. The item, "funds for expenses of travel to professional meetings" was given a very low rating.

Section D of Part II consisted of 30 items related to "other administrative practices and policies." The response-values on the 30 items of this section averaged out to 5.0, exactly the neutral point on the scale. Items related strictly to academic administration in general had an average response-value on the "satisfaction" side of the scale. Participation by faculty members in various kinds of administrative decisions was in almost every case rated low, indicating some substantial extent of dissatisfaction. A general trend is noted for the responses to be more favorable to administrative policies and practices at the departmental and School or College level, than at the all-University level. Perhaps the most crucial item

in all of Part II of the Questionnaire was number 76, "the extent of the administration's interest in what you are doing and in helping you to do it better." On this item the average response-value was only 3.8, and 60 per cent of the respondents reported response-values of 4 or below, indicating some degree of dissatisfaction.

Section E consisted of 6 items relating to faculty colleagues. Here the picture is one of rather general satisfaction; the average response-value is 6.3, the highest for any of the major sections of Part II. It is evident that for the average faculty member his colleagues on the faculty are an important source of satisfaction in his service at this University.

Section F, the final one in Part II of the Questionnaire, consisted of 8 items related to the characteristics of students. The average response-value for the group of items in this section was 5.2, slightly on the favorable side of the satisfaction-dissatisfaction scale. The average response-value for "the previous preparation of your students" was only 4.7, a little below the neutral point on the scale. Average response-values well above the neutral point were given such items as "the seriousness of purpose of your students," "the general promise of the students in this University," and "the extent to which students are achieving in accordance with their abilities."

When the responses to the 88 items in Part II of the Questionnaire are analyzed in accordance with the Schools and Colleges with which the respondents are affiliated, rather wide differences appear in the average response-values for the various units of the University. In general, higher than average response values are assigned by respondents from the School of Law, the College of Medicine, and the School of Retailing. Low average response-values are characteristic of the respondents from Washington Square College, University College of Arts and Science, and the School of Education.

When the respondents are classified according to academic ranks, the spread of average response-values is much less than when the classification is made according to School or College. In general, the lowest average response-values tend to come from the associate professors, and the highest from the (full) professors, with instructors and assistant professors occupying an in-between position.

When the responses are analyzed according to the ages of respondents, only relatively small differences appear in the average response-values for the various age-groups. In general the older respondents tend to report somewhat higher levels of satisfaction than the younger, but the differences on most items were not large.

Analysis of the responses according to the University salaries of the respondents results in a wider spread of average response-values than in either of the classifications on the basis of academic rank or age. This is largely because of the tendency of those in the highest salary-brackets to report relatively higher levels of satisfaction than the total group of respondents. One could readily reach the general conclusion, on the basis of the statistical data, that one way to keep at least half the faculty in a state of satisfaction would be to make the minimum salary $10,000. Respondents in the highest salary bracket, $15,000 and over, seldom report any dissatisfaction with any condition whatever, among the 88 items listed for response in Part II of the Questionnaire. In this group with the highest salaries, the responses to most of the items are enthusiastically on the "satisfaction" side of the scale.

Part III of the Questionnaire asked for reactions to a prepared list of suggested innovations in University services for faculty members. In the list were a number of suggested referral services to specialists on the University staff. The average response-values to all of these were on the

favorable side of the scale, with the highest average response-values being given to referral services on physical and mental health problems, legal matters, financial problems, and income-tax matters. Other forms of fringe benefits also generally drew responses on the favorable side of the scale, though for most of them the reaction was not particularly enthusiastic. The items drawing the highest average response-values were "tuition grants for children of faculty going elsewhere to college," and "University-owned rental housing near the campus."

A second section of Part III asked, "Under existing conditions at this University, how could any given amount of increased income best be used to improve faculty satisfactions and morale?" A list of ten items was presented for checking on the usual 9-point scale. All but one of the items received responses well on the favorable side of the scale. The item attracting the highest average response-value was "direct improvement in faculty salaries," with an average response-value of 8.3, extremely high on a 9-point scale. By contrast, the item "additional fringe benefits" rated much lower, with an average response-value of 6.5, though still strongly on the favorable side of the scale. The item with the second highest average response-value, 7.1, was "improvement of facilities for research." Two others rating high were "improvements and renovations of the existing academic plant," and "improvement in the holdings and services of the University library." The one item that drew a response on the negative side of the scale was "employment of a substantial number of additional faculty members."

Part IV of the Questionnaire was concerned with professional attitudes and activities of the respondents. One section asked for reactions concerning the relative importance of nine different kinds of responsibilities for this University. The usual 9-point scale was provided for checking, to indicate importance (values of 6 or above) or unimportance (values of 4 or [illegible]).

below). High average response-values were reported for several of these categories of responsibilities. The very highest, with an average response-value of 8.3, was "the teaching of graduate students.' Only slightly lower, average response-value of 8.1, was "the teaching of undergraduate students." A close third was "advancement of knowledge through research," with an average response-value of 8.0. Tied for the same response-value was "maintenance of conditions within the University that are comfortable and attractive for excellent scholars." Other items ranking lower, with their average response-values, are: "enhancement of the reputation of this University as a center for the higher learning," 7.8; "maintenance of a scholarly atmosphere within this University," 7.6; "preservation of the cultural heritage," 6.8; "application of knowledge to life situations," 6.0; and finally "the solution of problems of great national and international concern," 5.6.

Another section of Part IV presented a listing of groups to which a faculty member might have some feeling of obligation for effective service in this University. This also was to be answered on a 9-point scale, in terms of the importance or unimportance of each group in the faculty member's attitude toward his obligation for effective service at this University. The list of groups, with their average response-values as reported by the 580 respondents, is as follows:

The students in the faculty member's classes	8.3
One's colleagues on the faculty in his own department	7.5
Scholars throughout the world in the faculty member's special academic field	7.0
One's colleagues on the faculty throughout the entire University	6.3
Intellectuals in general in the United States and throughout the world	6.1
The administrative officers of the University	5.8

The Board of Trustees of the University 5.1

The alumni of the University 5.0

The analysis yields evidence that faculty members in general are oriented somewhat more strongly to their subject-matter disciplines than to the institution in which they serve.

The remainder of Part IV of the Questionnaire related to scholarly publications and connections with learned societies. The tabulations indicate that the faculty members of the University are in general rather active in producing scholarly publications and in maintaining connections with learned societies and professional organizations.

Part V of the Questionnaire related to the economic status of faculty members. About 46 per cent report home ownership, and an equal number report that they live in a rented house or apartment. About one-third of the respondents report some annual income of spouse from employment. The average annual income of self and spouse from sources other than the respondent's University salary was reported to be $4,523, but 18 per cent reported such outside income as zero. The average number of dependents is two, and 20.8 per cent report no dependents. About 18 per cent of the respondents reported one or more dependents attending college.

Part VI of the Questionnaire inquired about attractions away from this University. More than half of the respondents (55.6 per cent) reported they have had one or more offers of employment elsewhere within the past three years, but had rejected such offers to remain at this University. About 17 per cent were considering an offer at the time the Questionnaire was returned, or had already decided to accept an offer elsewhere. One-eighth of the respondents indicated that they were actively seeking opportunity for a position elsewhere, and about half of all the respondents reported that they would welcome such an offer.

One section of Part VI presented a list of fourteen factors to which the respondents were asked to react in terms of the importance of each factor in their evaluation of an offer that might come to attract them away from this University. The usual 9-point scale was used for the evaluation, on which the scale-value of 5 represented a neutral reaction, the values above 5 representing positive attractions away from this University, and those below 5 negative reactions to the factors. The list of factors and the average response-value assigned each by the 580 respondents are as follows:

The scholarly reputation of the institution making the offer	7.5
Substantially larger salary than that now being received	7.4
Opportunities for research	6.9
The extent of the normal teaching load	6.4
The kind of library facilities available	6.3
The kind of classroom, laboratory, and office facilities	6.2
The kind of housing available for the family	6.1
Fringe benefits, other than salary, such as retirement, etc.	5.7
Educational opportunities for children in the family	5.6
Opportunity to take on greater responsibilities and to render a greater service to society	5.3
Opportunity to be near relatives or other friends	4.0
Opportunity to live in a different part of the country	3.9
Opportunity to live in a different city or town	3.8
Opportunity to get out of university work and into some non-academic organization	2.6

Again it may be pointed out that "fringe benefits" rates considerably below "larger salary" in the rank order list of factors that would attract faculty members to some other institution.

The final item of Part VI asked respondents to list the names of a few institutions of higher education to which they would be attracted by the offer of a salary only equal to or a little larger than that now received from this University. Only 44.7 per cent of the respondents mentioned any other institutions in response to this question. Presumably the other 55.3 per cent would not be attracted away from New York University unless the offer involves a larger salary than at present received. Many interesting observations can be drawn from the analysis of the responses, with the respondents classified in various ways. For example, those whose principal service at this University is in research mention some other institution more frequently than those whose principal service is teaching or administration. The list of names of institutions and the frequency with which each is mentioned is very interesting, and contains some surprises. This list may be considered as a sort of "pecking order" among the institutions of higher education in the U.S.A., from the point of view of the N.Y.U. faculty. Perhaps this list should remain a closely guarded secret within the family at New York University. It does afford those responsible for academic administration some idea of the sources from which competition for capable staff members will be most difficult to meet.

As indicated earlier this summary presents only the barest outline of the findings from the Preliminary Report of the Study of Faculty Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions at New York University. The reader who is interested in the details on any item should consult the full text of the Preliminary Report, which is available at present in only five typewritten copies. Access to this Preliminary Report is controlled by the Committee of the Elected Members of the New York University Senate, of which Professor Harmon M. Chapman is chairman. A few copies of the Questionnaire form are available from the Office of Institutional Research.

-- John Dale Russell August, 1961